

Ho: C: Moore

THE

Horse and the Widow.

A

DRAMATIC PIECE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

F. VON KOTZEBUE.

D U B L I N :

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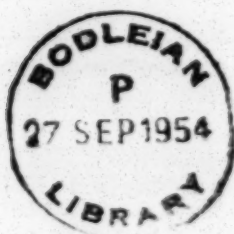
NO. 45, COLLEGE-GREEN.

1799.

Vet. A5 e. 2033(11)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TOUCHWOOD, - - -	Mr. MURRAY.
COUNT SANS CHATEAU, -	Mr. FARLEY.
KILLRUDDERY, - -	Mr. JOHNSTONE.
FERRET, - - - -	Mr. EMERY.
PETER, - - - -	Mr. ABBOT.
Mrs. TOUCHWOOD, - -	Mrs. DAVENPORT.



THE

Horse and the Widow.

SCENE—A Saloon in TOUCHWOOD'S Country House.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. TOUCHWOOD, (*Speaking as they enter.*)

Mrs. Touch. I SAY it is no such thing.

Touch. And I say your conduct is unpardonable. I have received some news from town, Madam.

Mrs. Touch. Is it possible any body there remembers us?

Touch. Rather too possible; my letters bring strange intelligence.

Mrs. Touch. Something political, I suppose. Is it from government authority?

Touch. What have you to do with government authority?

Mrs. Touch. I respect it with all my heart.

Touch. Yet you are a rebel in your own house.

Mrs. Touch. That only proves you don't know how to govern.

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Touch. So much the worse for both of us.

Mrs. Touch. I don't think so ; the wife should be the parliament, and the husband the executive power.

Touch. I wish you would only consider yourself as the speaker of your parliament.

Mrs. Touch. I'm sure I speak upon all occasions.

Touch. Yes, but with us the speaker only listens. To pursue your metaphor. Permit me to ask why you, as Parliament, do not manage our finances better ?

Mrs. Touch. What do you mean ?

Touch. The particulars of my father's will are not unknown to you.

Mrs. Touch. Oh dear, no ! I know them but too well. (*Tawns.*)

Touch. He left me a fortune of eighty thousand pounds.

Mrs. Touch. He shew'd himself a man of judgment.

Touch. But under the express conditions that I should never marry a widow or keep a horse.

Mrs. Touch. Ridiculous whims.

Touch. He knew my fashionable failing—a propensity to horse-racing.

Mrs. Touch. And what was the objection to widows ?

Touch. Alas ! his own woful experience led him to insert that clause.

Mrs.

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Mrs. Touch. No great flattery to your mother.

Touch. Let the dead rest in peace. In short, my father irrevocably ordained, that in case of my failing in either of these conditions, the whole fortune should devolve to my cousin.

Mrs. Touch. I have heard that about an hundred times.

Touch. But your memory is so faithless, that I must take the liberty of repeating it for the hundred and first time.

Mrs. Touch. Give your spleen as free vent as you please, Sir; but pray don't expect that I shou'd stay and listen to it.

Touch. Yes, Madam, I do expect that you shou'd stay and listen, while I lead back your attention to that unhappy day when I first saw you in a miserable cottage in Flanders, a prey to the most urgent want, and with nothing left you of all your former splendor, but the empty title of a Countess.

Mrs. Touch. Indeed, my dear Mr. Touchwood, you might take out a patent for the art of making fine speeches.

Touch. You may joke, if you please; but to me the recollection is fatally serious. My compassion awakened, love but too soon followed.

Mrs. Touch. A splendid triumph for my charms.

Touch. I made you an offer of my hand.

Mrs. Touch. Which necessity compell'd me to accept.

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Touch. Your husband had died for his country, upon the field of honour, as you were pleased to inform me, and left you wholly destitute. I imparted to you the conditions of my father's will, and explained the necessity of your former situation remaining for ever a profound secret.

Mrs. Touch. Well; and I have never revealed it.

Touch. Not in plain and positive terms, perhaps; but do you not perpetually refer to the subject in broken sentences that can scarcely be mistaken?

Mrs. Touch. How is it possible to weigh every word one utters?

Touch. When a word may cost us eighty thousand pounds, I should think it worth the trouble of weighing. My cousin, Madam, who has a strong inclination for my fortune, keeps his spies here; and these right honourable gentlemen have taken the trouble of weighing your *unweighed* words, to obtain proofs of your widowhood, and I stand a good chance of taking your fair hand a begging with me.

Mrs. Touch. Why did you not leave me in Flanders?

Touch. Because I was a fool. Would to Heaven I had avoided widows as cautiously as I have horses!

Mrs. Touch. Ha! ha! ha! had you rather have been reduc'd to beggary by a horse than a woman?

Touch.

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Touch. Nearly so—Love is the most dangerous race that a man can run, since his life's repose is staked upon the course.

Mrs. Touch. If your father was so much afraid of widows and horses, he should have sent you to Indostan, where the women burn themselves with their husbands ; or had he allowed you by way of experiment to keep a saddle horse, I might probably have made use of him to escape from your gallant retrospections, and thus you would have been rid of two terrible evils at once. [Exit.

Touch. (solus) Job ! Cato ! Socrates ! and all ye who have been plagu'd with vixen wives, look down from your immortal mansions, and teach me a little of your own forbearance.

Enter KILLRUDDERY. [peeping in at the door.]

Kill. Hiss ! Hiss !

Touch. What's the matter ? Come in.

Kill. If you please, Sir, is it you or your fellow servant, that can tell your master a gentleman wou'd speak with him ?

Touch. Sir !

Kill. I wish to spake with the master of the house.

Touch. My wife is in the next room.

Kill. Your wife—Pho ! be asy. I've half a dozen of my own.

Touch. Then you *must* be a happy man.

Kill. I just want to speak a word in the ear of
Squire

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Squire Touchwood, I am told he's the most jontlemanly man in the world, except himself.

Touch. By what name shall I announce you?

Kill. Tell him, Sir, if you please, that I am Phelim Delany Malvaney Killruddery, formerly a corporal in the Irish brigade, and now Major Domo, confidential secretary, and first valet de chambre to his excellency, Count Sans Chateau, who besides having the honour to be my master, is a volunteer in—Och Botheration! the name of his regiment is gone clean out of my head.

Touch. Your master is an emigrant I presume?

Kill. We are on our travels honey.

Touch. Well, Sir, now you are announced, favour me with your business—my name is Touchwood.

Kill. Och! tunder and fire, and is it yourself, and not your servant I have been talking to?—But I ax your honour's pardon, I thought you had been too well drefs'd for a jontleman; and, now, Sir, as I know you to be the most generous, the most humane—

Touch. Hold friend, flattery is a muddy pool, and those who dabble in it, tho' they may catch good fish, can never come away with unsoil'd hands.

Kill. Fait, Sir, if you'll hear my story, you'll find I have other fish to fry at present—You must know his gracious honour the *great* Count came to the *little* Inn yonder.

Touch. With a large suite I suppose.

Kill.

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Kill. Och ! you may say that—valet, coachman, groom, game-keepers, footman, cook, butler, steward—

Touch. I am sorry for the Count, he must find but poor accommodation for such a number of people.

Kill. Och ! fait, there's plenty of room—for my master does me the honour to unite all those offices in the person of Phelim Delany Malvaney Killruddery, formerly a corporal in the Irish brigade, and now—

Touch. And now perhaps your master may be in want of some little assistance, which if in my power to grant—

Kill. You'll do it with pleasure. I told his Lordship so myself. I therefore come as his Excellency's valet de chambre to inform your worship that in my capacity of game-keeper I had the misfortune this morning to shoot a partridge.

Touch. On my manor I suppose.

Kill. The devil himself couldn't have made a better guess of it. His Excellency desires in return that if ever you should be taking a walk either on horseback or on foot in the neighbourhood of Picardy near his estates, which now belong to somebody else, you may shoot all the game you can find.

Touch. And is this all ?

Kill. No faith it's not all—for in quality of cook, I happened to roast the partridge at the Inn here—

In

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In comes the London coach, and out jumps a Lawyer, as ill-looking a fellow, the present company excepted, as ever I clap'd my eyes upon.

Touch. (*smiling*) Well!

Kill. My master, who is politeness itself, ax'd him to take part of the partridge; so as soon as they had eat it all, and I had taken away the rest, they sat down to cards. The Count hadn't a guinea in his pocket, but he soon lost that and three more, for which he offer'd the Lawyer his word and honour.

Touch. And of course he took it.

Kill. You might as well have whistled jigs to a mile-stone as persuade him to any such thing—So then comes the landlord, and charg'd seven shillings and nine pence for eating our own partridge, which your honour was kind enough to make us a present of.

Touch. 'Tis extraordinary a man of the Count's quality should travel without cash.

Kill. Why, Sir, as to that Sir, my master has got two hundred pounds by him, which a highwayman robb'd us of on the road; and if the thief was an honest man, he would bear witness of it immediately.

Touch. In short the Count is embarrass'd. I must however enquire into this affair, if true, I shall wait on him with this money. (*Going.*)

Kill. Oh! bless your honour, he wou'dn't accept

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cept it for the world. He doesn't want any thing of the kind.

Touch. Then what the devil *does* he want?

Kill. The Count is a man of such nice honour, that he'd never pocket the least affront, that came in the shape of a present—but he has sent me as groom with a nate little riding nag, which he offers your worship for the before mentioned sum of three pounds ten shillings and nine pence.

Touch. A riding horse!

Kill. A nag. I only said a nag, he's below in the court-yard.

Touch. I'm very sorry, but on these terms I cannot assist your master.

Kill. Pray do your honour. It's the most convenient animal in the world—you may bring him by degrees to live without eating, for we have already made great progress in that art, ourselves.

Touch. As the poor beast is a sufficient witness of your veracity, here is the money, but you must also take back the horse.

Kill. (*taking the Cash*). I cou'dn't think of it your honour.

Touch. But I tell you I never ride.

Kill. So much the better for the horse, he'll soon be eas'd of his fatigue, and fait now honey, without blarney at all, my master will be for ever oblig'd to you; I'll leave the horse behind at any rate.

(*Aside.*

Touch. Tell the Count, I am much oblig'd, by
the

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the confidence he places in me, and if he loves partridges, I shall be proud of his company to supper this evening.

Kill. O the heavens may bless your honour's goodness. It's just what the landlord said, says he, if that jontleman saw a fellow crater in distress, and had but sixpence in his purse, he'd part with the last shilling of it to relieve him. But why do I stand here? I'll go to the Count, he shall come to supper, and if you should want me in the capacity of cook, you may lay your commands upon Phe-lim Delaney Malvany Killru'dery, formerly a corporal in the Irish brigade, and now, valet, steward and confidential secretary to his puissant Excellency, Count Sans Chateau, who, besides having the honour to be my master is a volunteer in—Sir, your most obedient. (*Exit.*)

Touch. This reluctance to accept a kindness is a hateful principle in a man's nature. When obliged to seek assistance, why should we be ashamed of receiving it?

Enter FERRET.

Ferr. Peace and happiness rest on this house.

Touch. That depends upon heaven and my wife. To whom am I indebted for this benevolent wish?

Ferr. My name is Ferret, by profession an attorney.

Touch. Peace is seldom the wish of your profession.

Ferr.

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Ferr. I come from London—from your cousin.

Touch. Indeed! and what does my cousin want?

Ferr. A trifle! only the possession of eighty thousand pounds.

Touch. His desires are moderate. But in what way does he expect to gain this treasure?

Ferr. By inheritance.

Touch. And from whom does he expect so noble a bequest?

Ferr. It is already bequeathed.

Touch. So much the better! And by whom?

Ferr. The late Timothy Touchwood, Esq;

Touch. Ha!—that was my father's name!

Ferr. The same.

Touch. You joke.

Ferr. I never joked in my life. I stand here as a servant of justice.

Touch. Alas! poor lady. She is often unfortunate in her servants.

Ferr. And I ask you plainly, sincerely, and audibly, once for all, without reserve, or circumlocution, whether you are inclined freely, voluntarily, and without let, molestation, or resistance, to resign the above mentioned property to your Cousin?

Touch. By no means.

Ferr. You do not forget the conditions of your father's will?

Touch. No, I remember them perfectly.

Ferr. That you should not marry a widow.

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Touch. Even so!

Ferr. Nor keep a horse.

Touch. Granted.

Ferr. Both which stipulations you have transgressed.

Touch. How so?

Ferr. Your present lady is a widow.

Touch. That I deny.

Ferr. At least was so when you married her.

Touch. Your proofs?

Ferr. We have witnesses sufficient of her own confession.

Touch. I have witnesses who will swear the contrary.

Ferr. Then we must send for certain people from Flanders.

Touch. (*alarmed*) From Flanders.

Ferr. Nay, perhaps they are already on their way.

Touch. Cursed fate!

Ferr. You see that we know what we're about.

Touch. Your information must come from your agent, the devil, and he was a liar from the beginning.

Ferr. Sir, I don't fear the devil—I've no occasion—I never did any thing to offend him in all my life; perhaps, he also lied when he whispered that you had bought a horse.

Touch. I a horse!

Ferr.

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Ferr. Of a French gentleman, at the neighbouring inn.

Touch. Sir, I have not bought a horse. I reliev'd the Count's necessities—and he——plague o' this fellow, what does he want?

Enter PETER, tipsy.

Peter. Your honour!

Touch. Well, what now?

Peter. Your honour has made a devilish bad bargain.

Touch. Hush!

Peter. You certainly have——don't I know the beast is lame?

Touch. (*pushing him.*) No matter.

Peter. Has lost an eye.

Touch. Go, I say.

Peter. Nothing but skin and bone.

Ferr. Pray let the man speak.

Peter. Perhaps you're a judge, Sir.

Ferr. No, Sir, I'm only an attorney.

Touch. I say, away with you.

Peter. But if I'd give five shillings for such a beast, I'd give a thousand pounds, that's all. (*hiccups.*)

Touch. Out of my sight, you rascal. (*kicks him off.*) I tell you, Sir, it's all a mistake.

Ferr. A very unlucky one for you—nay, don't fret yourself so—(*sits down*) you may sit down if you please, young man, tho' it is your cousin's house.

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Touch. I tell you, Sir, 'tis a miserable beast, blind and lame, which I have taken out of compassion to itself, and to its owner.

Ferr. No matter, 'tis still a horse.

Touch. I have never sat upon the horse, consequently he's not my *riding* horse.

Ferr. The will says nothing of *sitting* upon the horse—it only speaks of *keeping* the horse. The animal is now in your stable, you have paid for him, consequently he is your horse, consequently you keep a horse, consequently you have not complied with the conditions of the will, and consequently your property devolves to your cousin; the words are clear, and long life to the dead letter of the law, say I.

Touch. I wish the Count Sans Chateau, and his blundering Secretary, were both at the devil.

Ferr. Amen, with all my heart; they have now serv'd our turn sufficiently.

Enter the COUNT, *and* KILLRUDDERY.

Count. Aha! Monsieur! Je suis votre tres humble serviteur.

Touch. (*peevishly*). Count, yours.

Count. You must my dear Saar, accept my thanks.

Touch. For what?

Count. For vat, ma foi! for your generosity in redeeming the honour of a stranger—I am sorry, saar, that—

Touch. And so am I, damn'd sorry.

Count.

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Count. Pardonnez moi—dat is not possible to be sorry for such goodness.

Touch. Sir, it is very possible if it costs a man his whole property.

Count. Aha! vat is dat property.

Touch. By a clause in my father's will, I am to lose my whole inheritance if ever I keep a horse.

Count. Well, Saar!

Touch. Well, Sir,—why then there stands Mr. Ferret, a great lawyer.

Count. And a great picquet player aussi.

Touch. Who on the part of my cousin, claims this inheritance.

Count. Pourquoi?

Touch. Because I have bought a horse.

Count. Of me! dere is some mistake.

Ferr. Perhaps so, but we pass over nobody's mistakes—but our own.

Count. You have seen dat animal?

Touch. No, nor will I—If my cousin is to inherit, let him take horse and all.

Count. Killruddery!

Kill. Your Excellence.

Count. Have you sold my riding horse?

Kill. Not I, I'll take my oath of it—it was only a nag.

Ferr. According to the letter of the will, said horse includes all hobbies, gallaways, nags, mares, and little ponies. It must be a very wise man who can get you off this horse.

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Kill. An afs will do the bufinefs full as well; for I'll be upon oath, that the horfe I fold was only a mule.

Ferr. A mule!

Count. Yes my dear friend, a mule.

Touch. I breathe again.

Kill. He carried the Count's baggage fo honourably, that we promoted him to the rank of a riding nag.

Touch. Mr. Ferret, *long life to the dead letter of the law, say I.* Now, as my father only mentions a horfe—a horfe—d'ye mind?

Ferr. No matter, you can't fo well get rid of the widow.

Touch. (*afide*) Wou'd to heaven I could.

Count. De widow!—vat is dat widow?

Touch. Another of my father's whims;—having fuffered from marrying a widow himfelf, he has restrain'd me from one under the fame forfeiture, that attaches to my keeping a horfe.

Count. Well, Saar!

Touch. And this condition, Mr. Ferret fays I have alfo broken.

Count. Well, faar, if he can prove it.

Touch. I married a young French Emigrant in Flanders, fhe beft knows whether fhe was a widow, or not.

Ferr. Sir, we have evidence.

Touch. No matter, I'll call her. (*opens a door*) Angelica!

Count.

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Count. Angelique! vat is dis? une emegre—dis is some new misfortune.

Enter MRS. TOUCHWOOD.

Mrs. Touch. Thank heaven, we are at length to see some other faces besides our own. (*Sees the Count and immediately runs off screaming.*) Eh!

Count. Diable! Saar—permit I ask—is dat Lady your wife?

Touch. I am sorry to say she is.

Count. Then Saar, I congratulate—your property is safe. She is no widow.

Ferr. How do you know that?

Count. I have some raison. In de first place, she she is my wife—derefore she is no widow.

Touch and Ferret. You her husband?

Count. Is it true Killruddery?

Kill. I'll take my oath of it, and I believe your Excellency has reason enough of all conscience to remember it.

Touch. Then you are her husband, and you was not kill'd in Flanders.

Kill. I'll take my oath of that too.

Count. I vas have great deal wounded—I think to get rid of my wife, and I say I vas dead.

Kill. But he cou'dn't get a soul to believe him.

Touch. My dear Count, I thank heaven you are still alive.

(*Shaking him eagerly by the hand.*)

Ferr. Gentlemen, this is all very fine, but I demand proofs.

Touch.

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Touch. Her own confession, Mr. Attorney.

Ferr. She did not utter a syllable.

Touch. She was sufficiently explicit without it.

Ferr. The law has nothing to do with explicitness.

Touch. Then we have only to question her.—
Angelica! your two husbands want to speak to you.

Enter Mrs. TOUCHWOOD.

Mrs. Touch. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

(Laughs immoderately.)

Touch. You laugh!

Mrs. Touch. And why not laugh? many a girl smiles at the thoughts of having *one* husband. Why shouldn't I laugh who am in possession of *two*.
(To the Count) And so you are really in the land of the living.

Count. Oui—Je vive. I live to mourn your loss.

Mrs. Touch. Gallant in the extreme—I thought you had lived to die upon the field of honour.

Count. Since I have found you, I regret I was not so fortunate.

Mrs. Touch. (To Kill.) And you Sir, I thought you had been hanged as a spy.

Kill. Devil burn me, if ever I was hang'd in my life.

Mrs. Touch. So, so, then after all, pray Gentlemen, which husband do you belong to?

Count. Mr. Touchwood is so polite, he would give up his claim.

Touch.

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Touch. And the Count generously insists on resigning his.

Count. For de world, I shall not separate such happy couple.

Mrs. Touch. Very flattering upon my word—for you, Mr. Touchwood, whose spirits are influenced by the smoke of your Sea Coal Island, I had nothing to expect—but from you, my dear, who were educated on the shores of the Seine—

Count. It is the essence of politesse to resign the gratification of myself, for de felicity of my friend.

Mrs. Touch. (*To Touch.*) Then I am to remain with you.

Touch. By no means—Justice is the idol of an Englishman; elder claims take place of mine.

Mrs. Touch. Then I return to you. (*To the Count.*)

Count. Vous avez beaucoup de politesse.

Mrs. Touch. An elegant contest this. My curiosity is extremely excited to see how these very gallant gentlemen will settle the matter at last.

Touch. Well, Sir, how stand matters with the forfeiture?

Ferr. Very ill.

Mrs. Touch. Gentlemen, are you aware that my patience is not absolutely inexhaustible—I scorn you both with all my heart, and if a Lawyer were here—

Touch. If that be all, here stands Mr. Ferret, a very celebrated Lawyer.

Mrs. Touch.

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Mrs. Touch. Indeed!—Then tell me, Sir, what reward can I offer you to free me from both these monsters.

Ferr. Reward! why a woman who has two husbands, according to our laws, must be hang'd.

Mrs. Touch. Better than living with either of them.

Touch. I had thought of a more pleasant expedient for your emancipation.

Ferr. The law is positive.

Touch. But that speaks only of two husbands—Now if a woman should marry three?

Ferr. That certainly would save her.

Kill. Oh! blood an ouns, I shall be obliged to be after taking her myself.

Touch. Mr. Ferret you are still a batchelor. What recompence were you to have received from my Cousin supposing he had gain'd his suit?

Ferr. A thousand pounds.

Touch. Take the Lady and I will make it two.

Mrs. Touch. What!

Ferr. Two thousand pounds.

Count. I find it is de devil to be poor. 'To accomodate de Lady I would make it ten.

Ferr. If I thought the Squire was sincere in his proposal—

Touch. I never was more serious.

Ferr. Well, if you'll give the nag into the bargain.

Count. I vill answer for dat.

Ferr

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Ferr. Saddle and bridle ?

Kill. Take him as he is, my jewel; and if he is not sufficiently saddled with a lawyer on his back, never trust Phelim Killruddery.

Mrs. Touch. May I be favoured with your name, Sir ?
(*To FERRET.*)

Ferr. Frederick Ferret, Esquire.

Mrs. Touch. And pray, Mr. Frederick Ferret, Esquire, do you suppose that having escaped from two of your imperious sex, will be any inducement to me to submit to you ? no, no ! If I have the misfortune to marry again, the evil shall be one of my own chusing, at any rate.

Touch. Mr. Ferret may, however, think it unpleasant to relinquish the Lady.

Ferr. Not I, upon my soul—I'd rather take half the money without her.

Mrs. Touch. And now, Gentlemen, I take my leave—Let him draw up a provision for my future plan of existence, while pursuing my own ideas of happiness, I shall soon forget I ever had the honour of belonging to either of you.

Kill. And, pray Madam, after all, where will you have the goodness to bestow your lily white fist ?

Mrs. Touch. There (*flaps his face.*) Take that as the last mark of kindness I have to bestow ; and I am sure Mr. Killruddery is too polite, not to value the favour as it deserves.
(*Exit.*)

Kill. And a pretty mark it is ! The devil may burn

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burn me, if she hasn't left the print of my cheek upon her Ladyship's fingers.

Count. 'Pon my word, dis adventure would afford materials pour un grand Ballet.

Ferr. Or for an excellent Comedy.

Count. But vere would be de moral?

Touch. That repose cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, and that half the evils of matrimony result from want of sufficient caution as to our choice of a partner for life.

Kill. Och botheration I'll give you the moral myself—

S O N G.

Arrah fait but the Poet's a fool here,
He's been making a comical bull here;

The Widow's a Wife,

The dead's come to life,

And the Horse turns out only a mule here.

For the Lady, how marriage has cross'd her,

One found her where t'other man lost her;

The Lawyer would sell,

To each husband a shell,

While sily he swallows the oyster.

For me I've made many a blunder,

But that you won't think any wonder,

If Irish mistakes

John Bull kindly takes,

Not the whole earth can make us knock under.

If the critics should frown, and look gruff, Sirs,

And say that my ditty's all stuff, Sirs;

If they kick up a rout,

And ask what its about,

Why I think its about long enough, Sirs.

F I N I S.



